



# Bowland High School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 119726  
**LEA** Lancashire  
**Inspection number** 280645  
**Inspection dates** 11 January 2006 to 12 January 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Jim Bennetts

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	Riversmead
<b>School category</b>	Community		Grindleton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16		Clitheroe, Lancashire
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01200 441374
<b>Number on roll</b>	500	<b>Fax number</b>	01200 441633
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Vanessa Townson
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 October 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Maurice Graham

<b>Age group</b> 11 to 16	<b>Inspection dates</b> 11 January 2006 - 12 January 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 280645
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors

## Description of the school

The school has 500 pupils and has grown from only 350 at the time of the last inspection. It serves a widely spread rural community mostly to the north and east of Clitheroe. There is a grammar school in the locality and this affects the intake. Almost all pupils are of white British background and in the main they come from advantaged backgrounds, with few taking free meals. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs has decreased considerably but is still higher than that found nationally. Those identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is much the same as nationally, but a significant minority of younger pupils have difficulties with literacy. The school benefits from a major building programme that has replaced three quarters of the school's facilities. However, this has made the school a building site for the last 5 years and left the grounds somewhat cramped. From September 2005, this has been a specialist school for performing arts.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

The school judged its effectiveness to be good. Inspectors consider it outstanding. Pupils' achievements in most subjects in lower and upper school are exceptionally high. Where results in recent national tests and examinations have shown progress to be less strong, effective action has been taken and current progress is much improved. Pupils are ardent in their support of the school and enjoy almost all that they do. Pupils' enthusiasm is echoed by parents. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. This is at the heart of the remarkable personal development that pupils demonstrate and the outstanding work that the school does for their care and welfare. Teaching is consistently of high quality. The school has made many improvements in recent years; the most impressive is the re-building of three quarters of its premises. Senior staff and governors have been highly entrepreneurial in making this possible. They have pursued with equal vigour the school's recent designation as a specialist school for performing arts. Senior staff and governors are quick to spot any elements in the school's work that call for improvement and respond decisively and with sensitivity. For example, they are mindful of the need to make sure things are as good as they can be with English and with the difficulties many young pupils have with basic literacy. Despite the inevitable limitations of a small school, they are keen to expand vocational opportunities; they want to make the school site even better. Though costs per pupil are quite high, the school provides excellent value for money. Its track record gives assurance of its capacity for even further improvement.

not applicable

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure vigilance and support across the curriculum for pupils at present in Year 7 who have weak basic literacy skills.
- Monitor closely the improving achievement in English for older pupils.
- Explore curricular arrangements that would give pupils greater access to vocational courses.
- Seek the means of expanding the cramped school site in order to give more space for pupils to run around, and seek to secure freehold of the playing field as a basis from which to make improvements to it.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 1

Achievement and standards are outstanding. Pupils join the school in Year 7 with standards that are generally a little above the national average. Compared with schools nationally, there are fewer amongst them with very high standards, but also fewer who are very low. In recent years, however, a significant number of boys and girls have joined the school with weak literacy skills. In 2005, national tests showed progress in science to have been in the top 1% and for mathematics in the top 2%. Due to considerable staffing difficulties in the recent past, tests in English showed very much

weaker progress. At the time of the inspection, pupils in lower school were found to be making very good and sometimes outstanding progress in English lessons. In some of these lessons, the innovative approach of teaching girls and boys in separate rooms was productive in promoting free ranging discussion. Progress in English is well supported by close attention to marking. Pupils have consistently made strong progress to GCSE over the last three years. In 2003, the school ranked in the top 5% for the progress made from Year 7 to Year 11. There was slight slippage in more recent results, largely due to the difficulties in English. Science GCSE results are exceptionally high: one in three pupils had results in this compulsory subject that put them in the top 10% nationally. Half of those who took a GCSE in expressive arts had outcomes of this standard. With the new policy of entry in November of Year 11 for GCSE English Language, results were available at the time of the inspection, and these show a strong position at this juncture in relation to those for last summer. Boys and girls of all abilities make better than average progress throughout the school. This is fostered by suitably challenging targets. The school is beginning to seek greater opportunities for those who might benefit from more vocational provision. The school modestly rated achievement and standards to be good, but due to recent improvements in English, they are outstanding.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Inspectors and the school agree that this aspect of the school's work is outstanding. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary both in and out of lessons. They enjoy school, actively participate in the life of their school community, and their attendance is well above the national average. As a result, pupils develop a very positive attitude to learning and this contributes strongly to their achievement. They show respect for each other and for their teachers. They are given many opportunities to take responsibility and follow these through with commitment and maturity; these include the school council, acting as prefects, and administering the activities of the four school 'societies'. Pupils are confident that the school listens to their views, and are proud of their effectiveness in bringing about improvements, for example, in revising the school uniform, changes in school meals, and the use of mobile 'phones. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is a substantial strength of the school and contributes strongly to its distinctive 'family' atmosphere. Through this, and a very well planned and taught programme for citizenship and PSHE, pupils are being well prepared for life after leaving school. Their future economic well-being is being successfully underpinned by effective careers guidance, work experience, and the emphasis given to literacy, numeracy and computer skills. A 'step2work' programme successfully helps to prepare a few pupils for the world of work, though very few vocational courses are provided. Overall, pupils become mature, independent and self-confident young people with a strong community conscience.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 1

The quality of teaching is outstanding, though the school judged it to be good. It enables all pupils to make excellent progress. Teaching seen was never less than good, some was first rate and many of the good lessons had exceptional features. Teachers are really knowledgeable about their subjects, and often bring them to life in an exciting way. Very good use is made of electronic whiteboards to display attractive resources which engage the interest of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties. Strong features are the planning of lessons, the clarity of explanations and the way in which challenging work is matched to different needs. Pupils have outstandingly good attitudes to their work and respond to the teaching they receive by working hard and behaving very well. They have excellent relationships with their teachers and lessons are conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons. They feel that staff are very approachable and are rightly confident that there will be very good individual help from both teachers and classroom assistants if they have any difficulties. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly, so pupils know how well they are doing and how to improve. There is a close match of work to exam and test requirements to maximise pupils' chances of success. Progress is carefully monitored to ensure that challenging targets are met.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

Curriculum provision is good overall though the school believes it to be outstanding. All statutory requirements are met. The curriculum is well planned, flexible, and meets the needs of most pupils well, including those with learning difficulties. In Years 7 to 9, the programme is broad and balanced. There is a good range of GCSE subjects, and the flexible approach taken in planning the curriculum from year to year ensures that most are able to choose courses that meet their needs and aspirations. Despite the introduction of two new courses for physical education and ICT and additional work-related experience for disaffected pupils, opportunities for pupils to study alternative accredited courses are less developed. The quality of careers education, work experience and health and safety education is good. A good range of extra-curricular activities is provided, particularly in sport and performing arts, in keeping with the school's specialist status. These are well supported and enjoyed by both boys and girls, and make a significant contribution to their personal development. The school's new status as a specialist school for performing arts is fuelling vigorous engagement with this area of learning in the school and forging revitalised links with neighbouring schools. The recent rebuilding of three quarters of the school has lifted the quality of work in many subjects; it has been a visionary development. The school has withstood well the strains of living for many years on a building site. One cost is the now constricted small school site with much less space than usual for play. The poor drainage and gradients on the rented playing field remain a problem.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

The school cares for its pupils outstandingly well; inspectors and the school share this view. The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is very good indeed. All necessary procedures relating to child protection and health and safety are firmly in place and very effective. The strong pastoral system effectively monitors the personal and academic development of each pupil, and support for those with learning difficulties is of a very high order. Links with parents and outside agencies are very good; very few parents have reservations about the work of the school. Pupils' individual needs, interests and strengths are recognised and nurtured. They say they feel safe in school, and acknowledge the high quality of care and support they receive. They can discuss issues of concern with staff in the knowledge that appropriate action will be taken. Relationships are excellent, and pupils are confident that rare instances of conflict are dealt with swiftly and effectively. The school vigorously promotes healthy living styles, and gives high priority to physical education and performing arts within the curriculum. Pupils are well focused on the health implications of what they eat. Suitably high targets are set and progress towards them is well monitored. Pupils receive very good guidance with subject options, career choices, and with moving on to further education or training. Links with feeder primary schools and with post-16 providers are very effective and the quality of the school's liaison with these partners is highly valued.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

Leadership and management are graded good by the school but inspectors consider them to be outstanding. The school has cultivated a vibrant ethos in which staff and pupils know one another well, where all generally give of their best and take a pride in what they do. Occasional slips in pupils' standards are corrected with care and candour. For example, a Year 11 book has teacher's comments: 'Please see me during lunch time. I will help you with this', and also: 'I am insulted that you gave this in as homework. Please sort it out'; the book also has much painstaking correction by the teacher. Lessons, which are consistently exceptionally well prepared, and marking that is consistently thorough and supportive, meet with well deserved enthusiastic commitment from pupils. Leadership from the senior team and governors is clear and unequivocal. Management has an appropriate mix of formal and informal approaches, as befits the circumstances of this highly successful small school. Any weak practice is quickly identified and sympathetically attended to. Innovation is encouraged and subject leaders are given ample headroom to try novel strategies, for example in English where early GCSE entry for the more able and introduction of media studies are being tried. Methods for monitoring quality are secure and self evaluation is thorough and honest. The school is punctilious in canvassing the views of parents and pupils and these have influenced policy decisions. The governing body has vigorously supported endeavours to obtain the funding that has provided a re-building of three quarters of the school since the last inspection. This has had a major impact on the quality of life and the quality of subject work. Governors have been equally dexterous in monitoring

and enhancing the work of subject departments and promoting, for instance, citizenship and the school council. There has been enormous improvement to the school's facilities since the last inspection and interim emerging areas of weakness have been attended to adroitly. The school has excellent capacity for further improvement.



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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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13 January 2006

Dear Pupils

It was a pleasure to visit your school. We really enjoyed talking with you and your teachers.

We think your school is outstanding. Almost all that the school does is of exceptionally high quality. You play a big part in making it so good.

In general, results for Year 9 pupils and GCSE results show excellent progress from what you had already achieved when you came to the school. Where standards were not quite so high, the school has attended to things effectively. We were really impressed by the teaching. All that we saw was at least good, and much of it was excellent. In lessons, you participate fully and do all you can to help teachers to help you. You are growing up well and you show self-confidence and enthusiasm for all that life has to offer. The school is very well run by the headteacher, senior staff and governors.

With a school that is as good as this, there is little that can be improved. Teachers in all subjects will continue to do all they can to help pupils who have recently joined the school with weak writing skills, to make sure that they make good progress as they move through the school. The recent changes in English are going well; staff will carry on checking that everyone is doing as well possible in English. Some older pupils might have better prospects after leaving school if they had more chance to do vocational courses, and the school is looking into this. With the new buildings, there is not much space left on the school site to run around. And the playing field is not very good. The school will be seeing what can be done about these things.

You are really lucky to be at a school that is as good as this. Your generally excellent attitudes and behaviour have contributed greatly to its success. So that you do not let the side down, just remember two little things: avoid any temptation to mess about on the busses; and for older lads, tuck in those shirt tails to make the smart uniform look even smarter.

We wish you and your school every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jim Bennetts

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools